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FAMILY TIES

IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT YOU!

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

When I turn on my computer and log onto the Internet, the words flash before me, "It's you, you, you, it's always about you!" Why, I can have 160,000 content choices on my log-on page! There's also a chance I can win \$100,000. Well, count my blessings!

Walgreens is doing kids a "flavor." Parents can order their medicines in twelve different fruit flavors. Wow! I just saw a commercial that lets kids know their daily multi-vitamin now comes in bubblegum. Should we count our blessings that medicine can not only taste good but be in the flavor of my choice? Shall we count our blessings our children don't need to know the truth that all of life is not sweet?

My daughter was telling me she noticed her kids looking for just the right kind of yogurt at the grocery store. It wasn't their favorite brand or flavor they were looking for, it was the yogurt that promised the allure of winning a prize.

So, if the Internet says it, the pharmacy says it, TV says it, the grocery store, and who-all-else says it, could it be God really meant it to be all about me?

What a challenge in this self-centered world to not play into the general attitude and patterns of self-centeredness, revolving our lives around what we convince ourselves will make us happy.

It is human nature to act out of self-preservation, to express and promote ourselves the ways we feel like. While as Christians we may say, "Those are the ways of the world, not how I am." But don't we wonder what people are thinking of us, promote ourselves by dropping names, singing loudly, dressing up to look classy, or dressing down to look cool? Don't we let people know how well our children are doing and sometimes share our burdens in self-promoting ways?

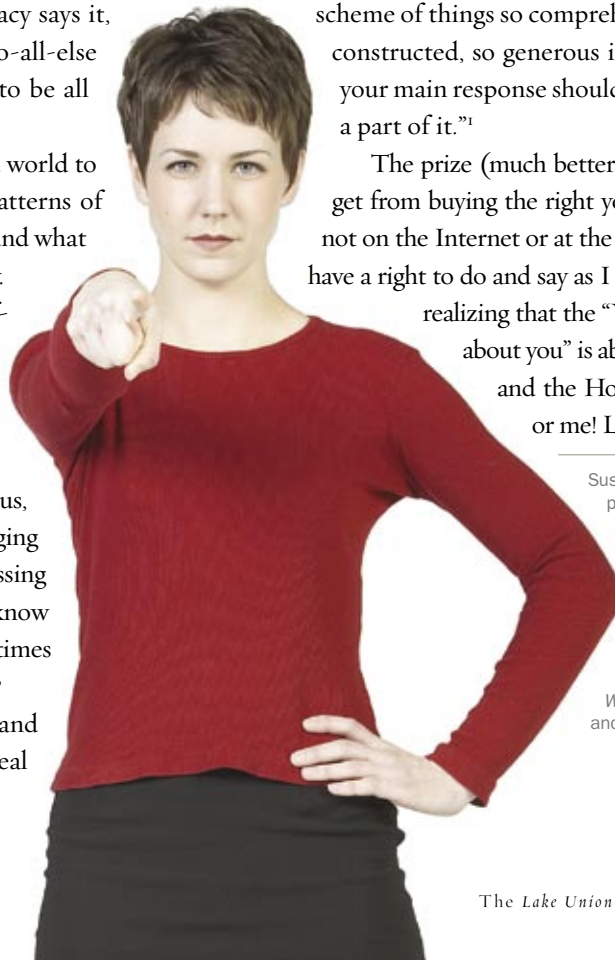
A great challenge for individuals and families today is to live real lives in this real

world. So, where do we find balance between being real and celebrating the wonders of technology and modern society, expressing ourselves as individuals, and yet living in ways that are not self-promoting?

I think the answer is wonder. Writer Thomas Gordon had an old psychiatrist friend, Smiley Blanton, who believed wonder, or these flashes of awareness of the marvelous world we live in, are of enormous importance in determining one's outlook on life. He believed wonder is the basis of worship. "If you're feeling lost or lonely or confused, let wonder open your mind to the ultimate

scheme of things so comprehensive, so marvelously constructed, so generous in terms of beauty that your main response should be gratitude for being a part of it."¹

The prize (much better than the one we might get from buying the right yogurt) is in the wonder, not on the Internet or at the pharmacy, or deciding I have a right to do and say as I like! The real prize is in realizing that the "You, you, you, it's always about you" is about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, not about you or me! Let's count our blessings!



Susan Murray is an associate professor of family studies who teaches behavioral science and social work at Andrews University. She is a certified family life educator and licensed marriage and family therapist.

1. Gordon, Arthur. *Return to Wonder*. Tennessee: Broadman and Holman, 1996.